

grief (dream)

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grief (dream)

by [fishbonesoup](#)

Summary

Dream goes through the five stages of grief in the process of realizing his feelings for his best friend.

Notes

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denial

Chapter Notes

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denial

when dream and george had first met, they were just teenagers. they both hated the idea of school and spent hours gaming and talking with their friends. it wasn't a surprise they got on like a house on fire. they had wildly different personalities, but shared every interest possible. dream spent every second he wasn't doing schoolwork with george. they fell asleep on call, ranted about their shitty days, talked through their coding problems. they were inseparable.

dream was only a teenager when he got his first crush on a guy.

it was hard to know it was a crush. it's always hard to analyze emotions you've never felt before. at first he thought it was purely admiration, he respected george more than any one else he had ever met. but, was it really realistic? he had always thought of george as his equal, could he really be feeling such a strong feeling of admiration towards one of his peers?

it wasn't until george made a new friend that dream realized he wasn't feeling admiration or platonic love towards his friend.

“dream? you on? i have news!” george’s voice came through his speaker. dream was idle on teamspeak when george finally logged on. he quickly unmuted.

“george!” he yelled into his microphone as a greeting, grinning even more when he heard his friend’s giggles on the other side.

“dream!” george shouted back, “you’ll never guess!”

“yeah? what’s up?” dream was still grinning and patiently picking at his fingernails, waiting for george’s response.

george giggled again, the excitement clear in his voice, “i got a *girlfriend, dude!*”

dream could feel himself stiffen and a sick feeling made itself present in his stomach. “a *girlfriend?*” his voice didn’t shake, surprisingly. he sounded normal, but inside he felt like every cell in his brain was going to burst.

“yes! her name’s maddie, she works at a coffee shop nearby-”

dream unintentionally let george’s voice trail off, no longer able to focus on it. his mind was racing with a million thoughts, mostly consisting of ‘*i feel so sick. why do i feel so sick.*’

“so? dream?” george’s voice came through and dream sobered up. george still had the giddy, childish excitement in his tone.

“she sounds nice, george. i’m glad for you.” dream said, regretting it as soon as it left his mouth. his voice was monotone and bland. he sounded the complete opposite of happy for his friend. george let out another laugh, but this time it was followed by a beat of awkward silence.

“i just wasn’t aware you liked girls, is all.”

it was the right thing for dream to say, apparently, because george let out a hearty laugh and a 'hey!' dream was only half joking when he said it, but that had been enough to quiet the sick in his stomach and put the grin back on his face.

sometimes george wasn't around to fall asleep on call anymore. dream settled by putting on some of george's youtube videos. he was a bit louder than george typically would be at this time of night, but dream didn't really mind. whatever would dull the ache in his heart would do.

years later, when george would mention offhand, “remember my first girlfriend? god, we were so cringe.”

dream would laugh and think to himself,

‘oh yeah. that stupid little crush i had on george.

thank god i got over that. ‘

Chapter End Notes

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anger

Chapter Notes

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anger

dream never took himself to be the kind of person who valued physical affection over other forms of affection.

he always deeply appreciated the way his mother would verbally say, “i love you,” to him every night. there was something that felt special about *actually* saying aloud how you felt about someone. it almost seemed courageous, in a way.

that changed for dream the day he flew out to the uk to meet up with george and wilbur.

dream never took george to be the kind of person who valued physical affection. but, from the second george locked eyes on his and charged forward, pulling him into a painful hug, he hardly ever stopped touching him.

there was a lot of subtle things, george sticking too close to his side; their hands brushing when they walked past each other. but, there was the more obvious. george pulling at his shirt sleeve for no reason in particular. george playing footsie with dream under the table. george sitting too close to dream on the beach. george resting his head on dream’s shoulder and humming contentedly.

george george george george george.

all of his touches were mindless and felt natural, but it didn’t stop dream from feeling a burn in his throat and making his heart stutter.

by the end of the day, dream’s face hurt from smiling so much. he didn’t know how george had managed to still be smiling after several hours. *not that dream minded.*

when it was time to say his goodbyes and board the plane, dream relished in his final hug from george. he boarded the plane with a sting in his eyes, a soreness in his smile, and an ache in his heart.

he allowed himself to cry on the plane ride home. just a little bit, not enough for his eyes to puff up and get red, before passing out for the remaining several hours. he awoke to the older woman sitting next to him tapping him on the shoulder and giving him a sympathetic smile. dream gathered his bag. he couldn’t help but feel like he had left something behind in england.

the next few days were rough. the initial excitement and adrenaline from dream's trip had completely faded. he was left feeling alone and drained in a large house with only him and patches. for the first few days, dream had attempted to blame jet lag. it wasn't a logical excuse, dream hadn't been gone long enough to be affected. besides, his body was more used to an irregular sleep schedule than it was to a normal one.

he felt restless. his skin itched and burned with the feeling. he struggled to sleep, either lying awake with his eyes wide open, or jerking awake in the middle of the night.

patches was his only comfort. he could watch her sleeping peacefully and his mind would go blank. all of the restlessness and frustration and anxiety would fade. but it was only temporary.

the worst part was not speaking to his friends, though dream didn't know why he was so unwilling to contact them.

dream was afk on teamspeak, scrolling through twitter, not really paying any mind to what he was actually scrolling past. the chime that signaled someone had joined the channel played through his speaker, and he quickly switched tabs to see who it was. immediately, another ding came through.

“dream?” came george’s voice quietly, “you active?”

“nah, i think he’s idle.” sappn said after a moment of silence.

another beat passed. dream said nothing.

“that sucks.” george said, yawning, “i miss him. he’s barely talked to us since he flew out.”

dream ignored the pang of guilt he felt and busied himself with checking the time. it was 1:30 for dream, meaning it was nearing 6:30 for george. he shook his head at the unhealthy sleep habits they shared.

“he’s probably still jetlagged, or something.”

“yeah. maybe.” george said quietly, “you don’t think he’s like, weirded out by me or anything?”

sapnap let out a high pitched laugh, “pfft, *dream*? dude, i don’t think you could *ever* get dream to dislike you.”

“what’s that supposed to mean?” george laughed awkwardly, clearly not getting what sapnap was saying.

sapnap simply scoffed as a reply, and dream could practically see the man shaking his head and smirking because george hadn’t picked up on his joke. neither of them said anything else for a while.

it wasn’t long before sapnap let out a long yawn and mumbled something about needing to get to sleep for college. george said his goodbye and a chime let them know that sapnap had left.

now they were alone. *well*, george was *really* alone. or at least he thought he was. george stayed in the channel, unmuted, for a long while after sapnap had gone. dream thought about saying something, giving george a nice friendly jumpscare, but ultimately decided against it. he was perfectly content listening to george hum while he scrolled through his phone, occasionally letting out small, breathy laughs at things he found funny.

dream tried not to think about how george was definitely staying in the channel because he was hoping dream would show up. the thought just made his skin itch more and the longing in his stomach grow harsher.

it was 2:47, 7:47 for george, when a small “*dream*?” came through his speakers. dream practically jumped at the sound, suddenly worried that he had unmuted at some point. but, when dream checked, he was still muted.

dream waited, silent and still, waiting for george to say anything else.

a yawn came from the other end of the call, “okay, goodnight then,” and a disappointing ding rang out. george had left the channel.

if dream had thought george was being quiet before, it was nothing compared to the deafening silence of being alone. he pulled himself up from the desk and collapsed into bed, suddenly feeling exhausted. he fell asleep quickly and suddenly, and he slept better than he had in several days.

everything was worse as the days continued. dream's nights and morning blended together without the structure of doing his job. the anxious feeling that had made itself present several days prior seemed to be returning with a vengeance. dream likened it to starvation. the desperation, anxiety, and longing.

when dream woke up, exactly two weeks after having returned from the uk, it was around 3 in the afternoon. he didn't check his phone until it was half past already, and he didn't get out of bed until it was nearing 4. everything he did felt so *irritating*. the bathroom floor was too cold for his bare feet. all of the food in his fridge sounded disgusting. the thought of checking twitter was overwhelming. dream felt like a ball of curled up energy and frustration.

he was lying in bed, with his phone on his chest when sapnap and george called him later that evening.

“dream? what’s up, man?” came sapnap’s staticky voice through his phone. dream didn’t know why he picked up the call. maybe it was out of desperation for some form of contact.

“hey? what’d you guys need?”

sapnap chuckled awkwardly, “we don’t *need* anything from you. we just wanted to, i don’t know, check up on you? it’s been a second since we all talked.”

it wasn’t lost on dream that george was still quiet on his end. he swallowed thickly.

“ok, so. *hey* . i don’t know what i should say.”

several beats of silence passed. dream couldn’t find in himself to cringe at his friends’ lack of a response to his words.

“dream?” it was george’s voice this time, still small and quiet and kind like it always was, but this time it was tinted by a hint of concern. dream hated it. “are you alright, man?”

“yeah, of course.” dream stated bluntly. if dream had been considerate of his own tone of voice, he could probably realize that he didn’t sound okay in the slightest. but he didn’t, and the concern his friends showed only made him more anxious and annoyed. he felt like he was boiling over and there was nothing he could do except sit back and watch.

“dude, just listen to yourself. why do you sound so *mad* at us?” sapnap replied, while george fell silent again.

“*mad?*” dream let out a scoff that was too aggressive to lighten the tension in the air, “i’m not mad, sapnap. i don’t need to talk you guys every single day. you guys aren’t the only friends i have.” dream’s tone was too bitter and he nearly regretted saying anything at all. it wasn’t a lie, but it wasn’t the whole truth. sapnap and george were the closest friends he had, it was unusual for them to go so long without talking.

“dream. you’re being weird. feel better, or something.” sapnap’s tone was demanding and final, it wasn’t often dream heard him talk like that. sapnap left the call almost immediately. george hesitated on the line, and dream could sense that he wanted to say or *ask* something else, but the *end call* tone played and the chance was gone.

dream touched the back of his palm to his face, letting his hand cool down the warm parts of his cheeks. he had a headache in the dead center of his forehead, pressure behind his eyes. dream felt exhausted, but wide awake.

a series of dings came from his phone, which was still lying on his chest. he took the hand off from his face to lift the screen slightly, trying to read the messages.

sapnap: pls tell me whats going on. george thinks it has something to do with him and ur trip

sapnap: i get that ur mad for whatever reason but dont do that to george. he feels like shit and he doesnt even know why

sapnap: we dont have to call again just txt me whenever. but make it soon pls

dream turned off his phone, not bothering to reply. he tried to lay and bed and close his eyes, but all of the emotions were overwhelming. he felt anxiety in every muscle, he felt guilt in the pit of his stomach, and, worst of all, he felt frustration all over. he felt *angry*. angrier than he had been since he was a teenager.

he felt angry at himself, mostly. for being dumb and dramatic and for never saying the right things, for making things weird in the greatest friendship he would ever have.

tears pricked at dream's eyes before he even realized he wanted to cry. a heavy feeling set itself in his throat, and he unintentionally gasped out some type of sob, and that was the signal for the floodgates to open. tears pooled in his eyes, and he had to sit up in bed to allow them to fall down his face. he sniffled and breathed heavily through his nose. if anyone else had been here, dream would've been able to pull himself together in an instant. maybe it was because no one was there that he cried as hard as he did.

like the angel that she was, patches came trotting into the room and dived into dream's lap, lightly pawing at his face and mewing. dream didn't even want to think about how his own *cat* sounded concerned for him.

dream smiled, tears still streaming down his face, and hugged patches close to his chest. she purred quietly in his lap and he appreciated the warmth and contact more than anything else in the world.

i miss george.

it was the first time dream had bother to ask himself why he was feeling like this, and the answer was almost so painfully obvious. it was bizarre how one interaction could turn dream into a completely different person. how, before he had flown to england, dream believed that the greatest sign of love a person could show someone else was a statement, “ *i love you.*”

after spending a mere few hours with a clingy, non-social distancing man, dream *craved* physical attention. dream couldn't think of anything he wouldn't do for a hug from george, right at that moment.

dream didn't like to think about what that might mean. the last time he remembered feeling like this about someone he was 16 and pulling up his best friend's youtube videos to fall asleep to.

he turned over to fall asleep, too exhausted to keep thinking about the drama of it all, patches settled down next to him, and he dreamt about soft touches on the beach and tight hugs.

Chapter End Notes

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bargaining

Chapter Notes

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bargaining

sapnap: dream? can u call? its just me

dream awoke with a start to the message alert on his phone. he sat up, blinking away the grogginess as he read the text.

dream: yah just minute

dream couldn't find a reason to care about whatever typos he had surely made in his drowsy state, he rushed to get out of bed. he found himself actually *wanting* to talk to sapnap. at the very least he could hear his friend's voice.

at the most, maybe sapnap could talk some sense into him about the whole george scenario.

dream shuffled to the bathroom. he swirled mouthwash around his mouth, allowing the harsh mint taste to wake him up a bit. he also changed t-shirts, feeling as though the one he had slept him had become a bit *worn*, to put it kindly.

ten minutes later, dream was fully awake, and pressed the *call* button nervously. he couldn't remember ever being this nervous to talk to sapnap, in all the years they had known each other.

sapnap picked up on the second ring, but neither of them said anything until several seconds had passed.

“hello?” sapnap said awkwardly.

“yeah. hi?” dream’s voice sounded rushed and apologetic. dream wanted to scream at how scared and childish he sounded.

“you sound a bit better.” sapnap stated bluntly, and dream cringed. he didn’t remember too much of their conversation from the other night, but dream did remember that it hadn’t gone great.

“sorry about that.” dream said quietly. sapnap didn’t say anything in return, so dream took that he was still supposed to be talking. “i guess i’ve not had the greatest couple of weeks?”

“shit, dude, *yeah*. i kind of fucking figured.” dream almost laughed at sapnap’s honesty. “what happened?” sapnap’s voice came out quieter and kinder than dream had really expected it to. he felt his stomach drop slightly.

this was his chance. dream could spill his guts onto sapnap. he knew sapnap was accepting and reasonable and the perfect person for dream to rant about everything and anything to. but, he hesitated.

“i don’t know. seeing george was weird.” it wasn’t the greatest thing dream could’ve said, but it was a start. the vague sentence had dream’s heart racing already.

he heard sapnap let out an exhale of laughter through his nose, “umm, weird *how*?” he could also hear the smirk in sapnap’s voice, like he just *knew*.

dream ran his fingers through his hair out of anxiety, “like, dude, i don’t know. it was just.. *weird*.” sapnap stayed quiet, forcing dream to continue explaining. “he’s, uh, kind of touchy?”

sapnap let out a bark of laughter, “*touchy*?” he said, amused, “like, he was flirting with you?”

dream felt a pang of dread in his stomach, “no, it wasn’t like that. you know what i mean.”

“no, i literally don’t. you’re shit at explaining stuff. he was all over you in a weird, but non-flirty way. feel free to explain more in depth, dream.” sapnap’s voice stayed monotone, and dream would’ve laughed if he didn’t feel his heart practically burst with anxiety.

“it wasn’t flirting.” dream replied, quietly. neither of them said anything, and dream didn’t feel like filling the empty silence with his own voice.

“do you wish it was?” the question was so blunt that it took dream aback, and several more beats of awkward silence filled the air. dream decided to reply with a less-than-genuine chuckle, that ultimately added more tension to the air.

dream heard sapnap intake a sharp breathe on the other end, “ *dream...* ” and the voice of pity returned, dream felt his defenses go up, “i don’t know what’s going on with you two, but the thing is, i don’t think you guys know either.”

“ *going on between us?* sapnap, i don’t have a *crush* on *george.* ” dream replied, his voice wasn’t harsh, but it was defensive.

maybe overly defensive, since sapnap replied with a small chuckle and nothing else.

“why do you think i have a crush on george?” dream kept the same defensive tone, although now he was asking a question he honestly wanted the answer to.

“you guys flirt literally *all the time.* it’s like your guys’ thing.”

“that’s just fanservice. you know that.”

“what about outside of videos? streams?”

“it’s...funny. you always laugh.”

“ *yeah,* it’s funny when you guys are actually joking around. half the time you two are just genuinely flirting with each other.” sapnap’s voice wasn’t mean or teasing, but he did have an amused tone to the edge of his words, as if he found the whole situation funny.

“whatever, dude.” dream replied. it was always just joking with george. dream couldn’t be that oblivious that he had just been openly flirting with george this entire time and not even realized. the silence stretched on, but it got less stressful as the call continued.

“dream, you know i don’t care right?” sapnap broke the tension and dream felt his chest warm a little.

“i know, sapnap.”

the call ended soon after, and by the time it was over dream no longer felt the anxiety in his chest.

he checked the clock, and decided it was still too early to be awake, and dove back into bed, trying to avoid thinking about the stressful situation as long as he could.

it had been almost a month since dream had made it back from the uk, and things were looking up for him.

he started sleeping normally again, and his body thanked him. his headaches went away after two nights of good rest and a full day of eating well again.

he had a couple of awkward conversations with sapnap and george, and even though nothing was really resolved, things had gone back to normal between all of them.

speaking with george had fixed the itching under his skin and the anxiety in his stomach. that was the part he was most thankful for. hearing george laugh and smile at the jokes dream made was as good as a cure for the discomfort he had been feeling for the past couple weeks.

but deep down, dream knew that the physical comfort was only temporary and the debate still raged on in dream’s mind.

-you like george.

-of course i don’t, he’s just my friend.

it was like the angel and the devil on his shoulder were play-fighting. dream didn't know which side the angel was on, and which side the devil was on.

the worst part was that this debate wasn't just going on in dream's mind. it followed him everywhere. under every tweet, in every twitch chat, in every instagram comment section. even his youtube recommended pages were filled to the brim with "*DREAM AND GEORGE BEING GAY FOR TEN MINUTES*" compilations.

the jokes hadn't bothered dream before he took that trip to see george. it was hard to keep up with the bit when every time george flirted with him, his heart seemed to take it seriously.

"dream! i have a gift for you." he watched as george's character sprint jumped towards him and crouched down in front of his own character.

they were playing on the SMP together for the first time since dream had gone missing in action, and it didn't take long for him to realize how much he missed it.

"yeah? well, hand it over."

dream was expecting a cool pick, or maybe an extra netherite ingot that george had mined in the time dream had been gone. what he wasn't expecting was for hundreds of various flowers to come spewing out of george's minecraft character.

"jesus, george," dream said, laughing as george continued to vomit flowers all over the wooden pathway, "where did you even get all of these?"

"i went to tubbo's to steal some books, and he just had chests full of them! so, i confiscated them."

"how *romantic*, george, you stole from a child to give me flowers," the words came half-choked, and dream regretted making any flirting jokes george's way. but, george just giggled and seemingly hadn't noticed dream's misstep. dream thought back to the conversation he had with sapnap, *half the time you two are just genuinely flirting with each other*. the words were haunting him, and he hesitated before every joke or comment or action he made towards george, desperate to prove to himself that sapnap was wrong.

“hey, i think i’m going to stream. you good?” george asked out of no where. the idea of a stream actually perked dream’s ears up, he was getting a bit sick of playing for the day. watching george play seemed like a much better option.

“yeah, course, i’ll be back in a minute.” george let out a hum in response, and dream could hear him typing on the other end, most likely preparing his stream. dream muted his mic and got up from his seat, stretching his arms behind his head as soon as he stood up.

he stumbled to the bathroom for the first time for several hours, despite having drank several gatorades since then. he went to the bathroom, but he wasn’t in a rush to get back. it’s not like he was dreading getting back to george’s stream, but it was the first time dream was going to be on anyone’s stream since before the trip. dream didn’t know what to expect.

the flirting jokes were always upped significantly whenever they were streaming or recording videos. they called it fanservice, but nowadays dream was wondering if that was just a convenient excuse, if dream had internally known his feelings for george all along.

dream washed his hands and used some of the cold water to splash his face, attempting to rub some of the sleep from his eyes. it didn’t work. dream stared at himself in the mirror for a second.

it wasn’t something he did often. he wasn’t anything special to look at, he thought. his hair was messy and uncombed and he had permanent dark circles under his eyes, a result of a bad sleep schedule and a best friend who lived several time zones away.

dream chewed on his lip and thought about how george had seen this face, *his face*. he wondered if george had thought he was worth looking at. dream had unintentionally built up quite the suspense for a face reveal to george. he didn’t mind that george saw his face, but there was additional anxiety that came with someone knowing what you look like. he didn’t want george to be disappointed, though he didn’t know why he would be. they weren’t dating, it’s not like george had to be attracted to him.

dream started the slow walk back to his office, mindlessly walking through his hallways, thoughts elsewhere.

i think george is worth looking at.

the thought wasn't necessarily new, george was *very* attractive, and that wasn't something dream had trouble admitting even before they met up. although, when he would say it aloud, it would usually be accompanied by giggles and very obvious fake flirting.

dream sat back at his desk, not bothering to unmute, and pulled up twitch to watch george's stream on his second monitor.

george had his facecam on, and dream took a second to purely observe george, without the hassle of having to make everything into a joke.

“thanks christina for a dono, i'll make sure to check out your twitter,” george was smiling, like he usually was while reading donations. he scrunched up his eyes and giggled childishly at a particularly upfront donation, and suddenly dream wasn't bothering to listen to what they said anymore.

george raised his eyebrows and let out a breathy exhale of laughter when one of their other friends would say something inappropriate. he would ever so slightly knit his brow whenever he missed an easy jump or somebody made a comment that confused him.

sapnap and george were running and jumping around the server whenever they stumbled upon dream's character, still logged into the game from earlier. it had been about an hour since dream said he was going to ‘*be back in a minute*’ and dream was still watching contently as george punched him in game.

dream quickly sat up moved to his other monitor, watching sapnap place a crafting table down in front of him. he let out a quiet breath of laughter before pouncing on sapnap and hearing his screams through george's stream.

“*george!* help me!” sapnap yelled, loud enough to make his microphone go staticky and for george to burst out in laughter.

dream laughed too, but remained on mute, and continued chasing sapnap around the world. george followed close behind, but dream could tell that george was too overwhelmed with laughing that he wasn't going to be a threat.

they continued like this for awhile, eventually dream went off of mute and added his sparse commentary to george's stream.

it was a fairly peaceful stream, and all of dream's previous inhibitions faded into the background and a satisfied, happy feeling settled into the bottom of his stomach.

there were less flirting jokes than there usually were, and dream didn't know whether to thank god or sapnap for allowing him to go an entire stream without experiencing any more panic around his feelings for george. whatever feelings they may be.

after george finally decided to end his stream and dream closed minecraft and turned off his computer for the night, he felt engulfed by the darkness and silence. the warm, fuzzy feeling was no longer present and dream missed it deeply.

he trudged to his bedroom with a yawn, patches following behind him happily. he collapsed into bed, feeling too exhausted to even be on his phone. he found himself staring at the ceiling for the next several minutes, managing to get simultaneously lost in thought as well as think about nothing at the same time.

patches had laid herself on dream's stomach and was purring loudly there, while dream combed his fingers through the hair on her head and around her ears.

suddenly, his phone buzzed on the nightstand next to dream, and he reached for it, trying not to disturb patches.

george: stream was fun today

dream didn't really know what to make of that. yeah, it *had* been fun, but the sentence felt awkward, like they were making small talk. maybe dream was just overthinking this. before he could continue overthinking, another text came in.

george: ive missed u

george: idk y u went awol but if u ever need to talk lmk

dream smiled softly at the texts. it was endearing and *so george* and dream had missed him so much.

dream: thanks gogy

dream hesitated for a second.

dream: missed u 2

he quickly hit send before he could overthink it and let out a breathe he didn't know he was holding. his phone buzzed in his hand only a moment later.

george: <3

and there it was, the aching returned. dream swallowed thickly, trying to cease the burn in his throat. he stared at the pixels on his screen and everything hurt.

dream had led himself to his own fate, years ago, by becoming close friends with a man that he would eventually fall in love with. their relationship had built up to the point where they were practically as close as dating, just with less emotions.

but only on one side of the equation.

the realization that dream loved his friend, his *best friend*, more than his friend would ever loved him back was crushing. dream felt every bone in his body give up. he fell slack, whatever energy he had left suddenly drained from every muscle in his body.

dream didn't bother replying, he didn't know what he could possibly say in response that would kill him from the inside out. so, he just left it. he dropped his phone back on the night stand, not bothering to put it back on his charger. he pushed patches off from his lap, ignoring her indignant meow, and turned over onto his side.

it was a while before dream fell asleep. dream didn't really care as the minutes turned into hours, the flashing lights on his digital clock reminding him of how little sleep he was going to get. somehow, dream felt he wasn't going to get a restful night's sleep anyway.

Chapter End Notes

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depression

Chapter Notes

tw! depression

this includes depressive habits, skipping meals. nothing too intense but be safe!! ily guys

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

depression

dream was stuck in a cave with nothing. his last torch was going out, the faint red light barely offered dream any comfort or any practicality at all. this cave was deep and narrow, with winding pathways that could easily make any explorer lost.

but, this cave was strange. there was no ore or mobs. the cave was silent, there wasn't even the faint sound of bats fluttering around. as dream crept further into the cave, he felt dread pile inside of his stomach. he knew he needed to find a way out of the cavern, but for some reason he kept going deeper and deeper. his torch only grew dimmer.

his body was on autopilot, but his mind was screaming at him to stop traveling into the dark abyss. his torch was almost completely burnt out, it's faint light providing merely a memory of the flame it once had. dream couldn't even remember what daylight looked like. he stared at the rough cobblestone and tried to picture grass, cows, flowers. nothing came to mind.

dream sat down on the floor, letting the darkness fully surround him. he watched the torch die and dissolve into smoke. even the embers had given up.

it was the morning after george's stream, and dream regrettably remembered how his night had ended. he knew he liked george before, but now everything felt real and adult. like, his crush had moved on from some teenager's silly obsession to an issue that could potentially ruin everything.

despite the daylight peaking through the blind's in dream's window, he rolled back over and buried his head into the pillow, gripping it tightly. he missed the dark. he missed being asleep. he missed not having to think about the consequences of his emotions.

his brain wasn't functioning right, and if dream had bothered to stand up, he knew his body wouldn't be functioning right either. his head felt heavy on his shoulders. his brain felt too heavy for his own skull. every thought weighed heavier and heavier on his brain.

his phone buzzed on the nightstand next to him. he didn't reach to pick it up.

dream didn't know if he had fallen asleep, or just fallen into thought, because the next time he rolled over, light was no longer streaming through his window. dream didn't know how he could have possibly been asleep this entire time and still wake up exhausted.

time seemed to be moving quickly around him, but dream's mind couldn't keep up. his head felt foggy and he felt lost in his own home. he still had barely been out of bed since he'd woken up, only to grab a bottle of water from the fridge.

the bottle of water now sat on his desk, room temperature and barely touched. dream still hadn't eaten yet, it had just slipped out of his mind. if he really thought about it, he wasn't that hungry anyway.

dream had tried to urge himself to get up several times over the past hour, but his brain would keep moving on to focus on other things. like how interesting his ceiling was. or how he could pick at the scabbed-over scratch on his hand. or how if dream pressed the palms of his hands hard enough into his eyes, he could see colors.

dream got several calls over the next couple of days, most of which he ignored. on wednesday, his mom called. that was the one call he picked up. they talked for several minutes, and when she eventually asked him, in a voice so kind and quiet, why he sounded so upset, he told her that he just felt stressed and overwhelmed with work. she eventually ended the call with an "*i love you, clay,*" and it was the most emotional dream had felt all week. somehow, it still didn't feel like enough.

dream scrolled through his list of notifications, most of which had been left unopened for several days.

discord - tuesday 23:14

sapnap: we should talk again i think

tuesday 23:37

sapnap: dream? im worried dude. talk to me. or us

wednesday 11:21

george: dream !!!!! can we record something today?

wednesday 13:56

george: r u feeling ok?

wednesday 15:43

sapnap: love u. im always here for u. no matter what

sapnap: we should call later k?

dream scrolled past all of the notifications. he was reading them, but none of the words registered in his brain. he was the living, breathing, definition of apathy.

his phone buzzed in his hand as he was holding it.

george: im calling u. pick up

the text was immediately followed by his phone buzzing obnoxiously. dream watched as george's profile picture flashed onto the screen. it was a selfie they had taken the day they met. his chest tightened.

without warning, his fingers reached to press the *accept call* button, and dream's stomach sunk when he realized that george had called him on facetime. he watched his own face, accompanied by messy hair, sunken eyes, and abnormally pale complexion replace george's profile picture on the screen. it was the first time dream had seen himself in several days. it was the first time george had seen him since england. he felt nauseous.

his focus quickly turned away from himself however, when he was greeted by george's face on screen as well. george looked pretty, as he always did. but, something in george's expression was off. his brow was furrowed together in concern. he wasn't dawning the bright smile he seemingly always carried. george's concern only deepened when he examined dream's own face on his screen.

“dream..” george started, his voice sounded caught in his own throat, “what’s going *on*? have you even been eating? you look so sick. are you okay?” george’s mouth flooded with questions and dream dropped his phone so that his camera would only show his ceiling. dream mourned the loss of not being able to see george any more.

dream said nothing, mostly because he didn't know how to respond, but also because he just didn't want to. he couldn't find the will to say anything that could justify the situation he had put himself into. he knew he looked bad, but the way he felt was even worse. it was the first time dream had been able to *feel* it; the hunger pains, the dehydration, the headache, the chapped lips. the depression that had settled into every nook of his brain.

“dream? i’m sorry. i don’t know what i did. or what happened to make you hate me so much. but i’m *sorry*.” george choked on his words near the end, and it sounded an awful lot like he was trying not to let his voice crack.

no no no no no no

it was all wrong. everything. this wasn’t george’s fault, it was dream’s. george should be the one hating him, not the other way around. george wasn’t the one who was going to ruin this friendship. george wasn’t the one who had ignored his friends for weeks out of selfishness. dream chest tightened further and he still couldn’t find the right words.

“ *george*,” it came out broken and quiet, a mix between dream’s emotions and his dry throat. he cleared his throat painfully and continued, “george. i’m sorry. this is my fault. i- i don’t know what to say.” dream knew what to say. he could rip the bandaid off right here, right now. he could stop both of them from feeling the anxiety of what was to come, and just bring them the consequences right then.

george sniffled on the other line, and dream felt everything inside of him break, “i love you, dream,” followed by another sniffle.

dream wanted to scream and throw things at the wall. he wanted to punch his pillow until it burst into a flurry of feathers. he wanted to go on a run and never come back.

dream didn’t do any of those things. dream collapsed into the pillow behind him and said quietly, “i love you too, george.”

it was platonic. it was two best friends making up after a complicated couple of weeks. it wasn’t romantic or happy. it wasn’t the romcom ending, where they ran into each other’s arms on the beach, and eventually moved into a nice suburban neighborhood and got a dog and had two kids. george hadn’t said “i love you” to dream any differently than dream had heard it from him before.

the day george hit a million subscribers, and he called him, giddy with excitement. they both shouted into their microphones at each other until their ears hurt. george yelled, “*i fucking love you, dream,*” with a laugh. george had meant as friends back then, and he meant as friends now.

dream finally let the tears flow through his eyelashes. they ran off the side of his face and left dark splotches on his pillow.

dream heard a hiccup through his phone speaker, reminding him of george’s presence, and he was glad george couldn’t see the trainwreck that he was right now.

“what happened? why don’t we talk anymore?” george said quietly, his hiccups interrupting him occasionally. for once, dream was glad he couldn’t see george’s face. he didn’t think he could stand seeing him this upset.

“i don’t know george. i’m just,” dream trailed off, not knowing how to avoid talking about such a sensitive subject, “things are just different, i think.”

“what? what do you mean?” there was a slight tinge of panic in george’s voice, “we’re still friends, right?”

dream almost wanted to laugh, “*yeah*, george, of course we’re still friends. that’s, that’s not what i meant.”

another sniffle, “then what?”

dream hesitated, not having any clue what he could possibly say, “meeting you was,” *was what?* “overwhelming.”

it was a half-truth. it was *overwhelming* to put it lightly. meeting george had changed everything.

george was silent on the other end, “are we going to be okay?”

“yeah.” dream lied, his stomach sinking, “we’re going to be fine.”

“and that was it? you were just anxious about the trip?”

“yeah, that was it,” dream lied again, biting his lip until he tasted metal.

george let out an exhale, loud enough to hear on the other end. dream let out a breathe he was holding as well. the tightening in his chest released.

“can we just play minecraft? i miss you.” george said, sniffling again. dream smiled and wiped the tears from his face.

“sure, gogy. give me a second.”

Chapter End Notes

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acceptance

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

acceptance

dream wasn't the type of person to give up easily. he was competitive, sometimes to a fault. his desk would often take a beating when he died in minecraft, and his microphone would sometimes struggle to live on whenever dream would scream too loudly into it. but, it was in dream's nature to fight for what he wanted.

dream had decided to not fight for george.

the consequences of failure greatly outweighed the benefits of his success. dream would rather have george as just a friend than lose him entirely, any day of the week. no question. dream figured that one day his feelings would fade into the background, and he would simply remember them and laugh.

that didn't mean it didn't still hurt when he felt his chest tighten at a joke sapnap would make about the two of them. or when george would spew hundreds of roses at him for no reason in particular. he would sometimes go quiet at the end of the jokes. he really tried to keep his brain focused on the things that wouldn't send him spiraling again, but it was hard.

luckily, sapnap and george hadn't let dream go this time. in fact, in the two weeks since dream had stumbled out of his depressive state, he couldn't remember a time where he was simultaneously awake and *not* on a call with either george, sapnap, or both. there had even been several nights where dream woke up with his face on his desk, discord still open on his computer and his friends still on the call.

dream found himself thankful that george liked to have his facecam on. dream would spend most of the time with george's face filling up the entirity of his second monitor, and a half-edited video open on the other screen. it was hard to get work done when everytime george would laugh, dream would swing his head around to get a peak at george's smile. dream let himself take advantage of moments like that. maybe it wasn't the ideal situation for someone trying to get rid of a crush, but dream wasn't angry at himself anymore. he wouldn't shut down in anxiety everytime a joke was made, or feel the depression rotting away at his brain.

for the most part, dream made peace with his emotions. sapnap had not, however.

“*dreammm*,” sapnap whined to him one day, “you’re a fucking *idiot*.”

it was early morning, and dream and sapnap were alone in a call. dream was writing code for an upcoming video and sapnap was determined to annoy him.

“sapnap. i’ve told you. *the risk of losing george entirely*-”

“*isn’t worth the benefits of dating him*,” sapnap finished mockingly, “you keep saying that and it’s bullshit. it’s bull. shit.”

dream scoffed on the other end, too focused to bother with responding. sapnap let out a groan.

“dream, you’re suffering. you have no idea how bad you sounded those couple of weeks. we were so worried, dude. i just, i couldn’t stand it if you got like that again and i could’ve done something to prevent it.”

“i’m not going to get like that again, okay? i promise. everything’s been a lot better now anyway.”

“dream!” sapnap screeched, “please, just listen to me for once in your fuc-”

a chime signaled that someone joined the call, and the only person that had access to the server was-

“george!” sapnap yelled as a greeting, “thank *god*, you’re here. dream needs someone to talk sense into him.”

“sapnap, i swear to god.” dream said, his face heating up in embarrassment. though, he did switch tabs so discord came to the front and george’s face lit up his screen.

“what? why?” george said, his voice tinted with actual concern.

“sapnap. leave it.” dream muttered, knowing full well that sapnap was not going to leave it.

“georgie, our dear friend dream has gotten himself into a pickle,”

dream dropped his head into his hands, his stomach doing backflips in anticipation for what sapnap was going to say next.

“dream’s a coward, and he refuses to tell the person he likes that he likes them.”

dream could’ve screamed right there and there, because no matter what he had expected sapnap to say, he didn’t expect him to say *that*.

“sapnap i’m going to absolutely murder y-”

“got-to-go-class-now-bye!” sapnap rushed out, and dream heard the beep and saw sapnap’s profile picture leave the call. he didn’t even have time to mention that it was a saturday.

he sat, open mouthed at the screen. he barely remembered george was still there, he had yet to say a word.

“um-” george coughed into his hand awkwardly, and dream flicked his eyes over to the screen. george’s face was slightly red and his brow was knitted together. “who is it, then?”

it came out stiff and clunky, like george was speaking the words for the first time. dream hated it. he turned his eyes away from george without thinking. he didn’t say anything for a second, so george decided to fill the silence.

“i mean, you should probably just tell them right? it’s not healthy to keep all of it bottled up like that.”

dream almost laughed at the irony. he wondered if george would still be saying that if he knew dream’s feelings were for him.

deep down, he knew george and sapnap were right, that this wasn't going to just fade into the background. dream would have to deal with this, or would come back to bite him like it already had before.

he wanted to tell george. he wanted to stop running from his problems. the thought was terrifying.

"uhh, it's um, heh." dream exhaled roughly through his nose, "it's you. i like you."

it came out kind of muffled and uncertain, but dream was certain george had heard him. the silence was deafening. dream felt tension leave his shoulders. *it was done. no matter what came next, at least dream knew he was strong enough to say the words.*

dream had his forehead resting on the palm of his hand, and he could barely find the strength to lift his head up. but he needed to see george's reaction.

george's eyebrows were furrowed even further together, his face so twisted in confusion that it looked painful. his mouth was slightly open and he was blinking slowly.

after a few long seconds, george finally found the words to say something, "can you- can you turn your cam on?"

dream hesitated, but ultimately he was fighting a losing battle. dream would've done anything george asked him too.

he flipped his webcam on and changed a couple of settings on his discord. it took a second, but eventually dream's fuzzy, low quality camera loaded. dream ran a hand through his hair, subconsciously remembering that he hadn't bothered to brush through it this morning.

his eyes flickered back over to george, who now was gnawing on his bottom lip. the lighting on george's face changed, indicitive that dream's facecam had loaded on his screen.

dream saw george's face relax and he stopped chewing on his lip nervously. he george saw let out a deep breathe and his mouth opened slightly, like he was searching for the words to say next.

“can you, uh, say it again?” george said with more confidence than he previously had.

dream blinked a couple of times in confusion, and his eyes dropped to look at his desk.

was george making fun of him? why did he need to hear it again?

it's not like it matters , dream thought solemnly.

so the words tumbled out of dream’s mouth for a second time, “i like you.”

he was staring directly at george that time, and the words came out clear.

george’s eyes lit up subtly, in a way that dream could have missed if he wasn’t looking at him in that exact moment. george’s eyebrows unfurrowed and the faintest hint of a smile curled the ends up george’s lips.

“you mean it.” it came out more as statement, rather than a question, “i like you, too.”

wait, what?

“huh?” dream said. it came out louder than he intended, and the tension became more bearable as he saw george crack a smile and turn a deeper red.

“ *i like you.* ” he giggled, and dream could see the relief dawn on george’s face. he recognized that relief, it was the same feeling he felt when he had said the words only a moment ago.

dream felt every bit of stress he had in his body and heart flood out of him, and he smiled despite himself. he felt dizzy with a mix of emotions, adrenaline running at the top of the list.

george was still grinning on the screen. dream couldn’t take his eyes off of him.

“we’re fucking *idiots* ,” dream groaned, still smiling.

“ *yeah, jesus.*” george breathed out another sigh, “god, dream. i thought you hated me.”

“ *hated you? what? why?*”

“because,” george huffed, “you should’ve seen the vlog footage, i was all over you. i thought you had, like, figured out i liked you and hated me for it.”

dream stared at george through his screen, remembering what he had felt like on that day. to see and feel and touch george. part of him wished he could go back to that day, knowing what he knew now.

dream watched george, still holding his grin. his eyes were crinkled, his cheeks flush. the pale light of his computer screen reflected onto his face. they sat there for a second, grinning at each other like two awkward kids on a first date.

nah, dream thought, i wouldn’t want to change anything.

Chapter End Notes

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